

## PRESS RELEASE

TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

### DONMAR WAREHOUSE AND CLEAN BREAK ANNOUNCE FULL CASTING FOR

## **[BLANK]**

A Donmar Warehouse and Clean Break co-production.

A new play by **Alice Birch**

Friday 11 October – Saturday 30 November 2019

PRESS NIGHT: **Thursday 17 October 2019**

Director **Maria Aberg**

Designer **Rosie Elnile**

Lighting Designer **Jess Bernberg**

Sound Designer **Carolyn Downing**

Video Designer **Heta Multanen**

Movement Director **Ayse Tashkiran**

Casting Director **Anna Cooper CDG**

The Donmar Warehouse and Clean Break today announce full casting for the world premiere of **[BLANK]** a new play by **Alice Birch**. Directed by **Maria Aberg**, full casting includes **Ayesha Antoine, Shona Babayemi, Sophia Brown, Jackie Clune, Grace Doherty, Lucy Edkins, Zaris-Angel Hator, Zainab Hasan, Joanna Horton, Thusitha Jayasundera, Petra Letang, Leah Mondesir-Simmonds, Kate O'Flynn, Ashna Rabheru, Jemima Rooper and Taya Tower.**

*She can't stay awake.*

*She sold drugs.*

*She's good at interrogations.*

*She drinks in the mornings.*

*She ate a rabbit.*

*She smashed up a shop.*

*She stabbed a man.*

*She used a hammer.*

*She had a baby.*

*She can't find her mother.*

*She's covered in blood and doesn't know why*

**Alice Birch's** heartbreaking new play reaches across society to explore the impact of the criminal justice system on women and their families.

From 100 unnamed scenes, this theatrical provocation challenges the creative team to construct an entirely unique production. Directed by **Maria Aberg**, **[BLANK]** celebrates the 40th anniversary of Clean Break, the leading theatre company working with women affected by the criminal justice system.

A Donmar Warehouse and Clean Break co-production.

**[BLANK]** is the third production in Artistic Director Michael Longhurst's first season at the Donmar Warehouse. It is the highlight of Clean Break's 40th Anniversary, celebrating four decades of making inspiring theatre with women's voices at its heart. The year launched with *Inside Bitch* at the Royal Court and has included *Rebel Voices* – an anthology of 40 monologues from the company's canon, published by Methuen Drama; *Belong* performed by Clean Break's Young Members at the Arcola and Lyric Hammersmith; Chloë Moss's play *Sweatbox*, touring the UK in a prison van; a first collaboration with Cardboard Citizens; and talks and events throughout the year.

Continuing its commitment to engaging new audiences, the Donmar is simplifying ticket access schemes with **DONMAR DAILY RELEASE**. This new scheme sees a minimum of 40 additional tickets released for sale every morning for performances seven days later. Audiences can sign up to receive information about productions and ticketing on the Donmar's website, [www.donmarwarehouse.com](http://www.donmarwarehouse.com).

The Donmar's successful free ticket scheme for those aged 16 -25, **YOUNG+FREE**, will continue with **[BLANK]**, offering seats for performances across the season with tickets released by ballot at the end of every month. **YOUNG+FREE** is funded through the generosity of audiences via the Donmar's **PAY IT FORWARD** scheme. These donations have enabled the Donmar to allocate more than 18,000 free tickets to those aged under 26. Clean Break and the Donmar will also enable a number of women who have been affected by the criminal justice system to see the production for free.

Before **[BLANK]** takes to the Donmar stage, the UK premiere of *Appropriate* by **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**, directed by **Ola Ince**, starring **Monica Dolan** and **Steven Mackintosh**, runs until 5 October 2019. Further productions include *Teenage Dick* by **Mike Lew**, directed by **Michael Longhurst** and *Far Away* by **Caryl Churchill**, directed by **Lyndsey Turner** – both of which will go on sale soon.

**Alice Birch (Writer)** is the winner of the Arts Foundation Award for Playwriting 2014, the co-winner of the George Devine Award for Most Promising Playwright 2014 and was shortlisted for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award in 2012 and 2015. Theatre includes: *La Maladie de la Mort* (Bouffes du Nord); *Anatomy of a Suicide* (Royal Court), *Schatten* (Schaubühne, Berlin); *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* (RSC/Soho Rep), *Ophelias Zimmer* (Royal Court/ Schaubühne, Berlin), *We Want You to Watch* (National Theatre), *Little Light* (Orange Tree), *Little on the inside* (Almeida/ Clean Break) and *Many Moons* (Theatre 503). Film includes *Lady Macbeth* for the BBC, BFI and Creative England which was the winner of the International Critics' Prize at San Sebastian Film Festival 2016, the Best First Feature at Zurich Film Festival 2016, Best Screenplay at Turin Film Festival 2016 and Best Screenplay at the British Independent Film Awards 2017.

**Maria Aberg (Director)** makes her Donmar Warehouse directing debut with **[BLANK]**. Maria's recent work includes *Little Shop of Horrors* (Regent's Park Open Air), *Dr Faustus*, *The White Devil*, *As You Like It*, *King John*, *The Gods Weep*, *Days of Significance* (RSC), *Hotel* (National Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Royal Exchange, Manchester), *The Chairs* (Theatre Royal Bath), *Alaska* (Royal Court) and Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox* (Nuffield, Southampton and Lyric Hammersmith).

**Ayesha Antoine** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in **[BLANK]**. Her theatre credits include *Hamlet* and *Red Velvet* (Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company), *Life of Galileo* and *Trade* (Young Vic), *Dirty Great Love Story* (Arts), *The Suicide* (National Theatre), *The Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes* and *The House That Will Not Stand* (Tricycle), *The Ghost Train* (Royal Exchange, Manchester/Told By An Idiot), *Venice Preserv'd* (The Spectators' Guild), *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Heroero of Namibia* (Bush), *Tartuffe* (Birmingham Rep), *Surprises* and *Absurd Person Singular* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Cinderella*, *Red Riding Hood*, *Madblud* and *Familyman* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *One Monkey Don't Stop No Show* (Eclipse Theatre), *The Mountaintop* (Derby LIVE), *Blue/Orange* (Arcola), *My*

*Wonderful Day* (Off Broadway/UK Tour), *The Thirteen Midnight Challenges of Angelus Diablo* (RSC), *Big White Fog* (Almeida), *Master Juba* (Luton Library Theatre), *Upstairs in the Sky* (Quicksilver Children's Theatre) and *The Firework Maker's Daughter* (Lyric Hammersmith). Her TV credits include *The Long Song*, *Thunderbirds Are Go!*, *Chewing Gum*, *Nurse*, *Pompidou*, *Bellamy's People*, *Skins*, *Mouth To Mouth*, *Holby City*, *Doctor Who*, *Parents of the Band*, *Bigger Better Brighter*, *Placebo*, *Kerching*, *The Bill* and *Grange Hill*.

**Shona Babayemi** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Shona trained at the Identity School of Acting (IDSA) after studying Theatre and Drama Studies at the University of London. Whilst working with Cardboard Citizens, Shona had the opportunity of working internationally in Berlin - performing in *Invisible People* (Ufa Fabrik International Culture Centre). She went on to tour with the company in their production of *Rising*, playing Danielle. Joining the School for Wise Children, Shona worked alongside theatre director Emma Rice, devising and exploring varying theatrical techniques. She is an avid writer and spoken word artist and continues to pursue this as a Soho Theatre Writers Member. She will join the Royal Court Theatre's Playwriting group in January 2020. Shona remains an ardent and active member of the Clean Break Theatre Company, participating in workshops and programmes as well as recently performing in their promenade production *All The Lights Are On* as part of the company's 40th anniversary celebrations.

**Sophia Brown** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her TV credits include *The Capture*, *Girl/Haji*, *Marcella*, *Clique*, *Guerrilla*, *Casualty* and *Top Boy*. Her film credits include *A Battle in Waterloo*, *Disobedience*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Genius*.

**Jackie Clune** returns to the Donmar Warehouse after appearing in *Measure for Measure*, the Shakespeare Trilogy, *Henry IV* and *The Vote*. Jackie also appeared in the Donmar's productions of *The Tempest* and *Henry IV* at St. Ann's Warehouse, NY. Her other theatre credits include *Emilia* (Vaudeville), *Utility* (Orange Tree), *Fallen Angels* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Candide* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *9 To 5* (Ambassadors), *Mogadishu* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Mamma Mia!* (Little Star), *Julie Burchill Is Away* (Soho) and *Showstopper* (G & J). Her TV credits include *Motherland* (series 1 & 2), *Good Omens*, *Three Girls*, *Borderline*, *Breathtaking*, *The Bill*, *EastEnders* and *Waking the Dead*. Her film credits include *Jawbone* and *Denial*.

**Grace Doherty** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *The Wild Duck* (Almeida), *The Ferryman* (Gielgud/Royal Court), *Love* (Birmingham Rep/National Theatre), *X* (Royal Court) and *Made in Dagenham* (Adelphi). Her radio credits include *The Door in the Pillow*, *Home Front*, *Norse Mythology*, *The Summer Book* by Tove Jansson and *Pearl*.

**Lucy Edkins** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her previous acting credits include *Inside Bitch* (Royal Court). Lucy has been involved with Clean Break since the mid-90s, following her work with Nomads..., a theatre and film company she co-founded that worked with vulnerable groups (including prisoners) and performed plays in unconventional venues. Lucy has taken part in workshops with Clean Break including a Complicité workshop culminating in a devised piece, *The Ex-Industry*, performed in local prisons and a rehab unit. She went on to work professionally with Clean Break in their stage management teams, on productions including *Mules* and *Yard Gal* at the Royal Court, touring nationally with the latter around prisons and art centres. Her work in theatre also includes stage managing and an assistant director on *Life After Life* (National Theatre). Since 2003 she has concentrated on artistic work across media, including a couple of years playwriting and showcasing new works. Her television and short film credits include *Casualty* and *Eleanor*.

**Zaris-Angel Hator** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *Fanny and Alexander* (Old Vic), *Peter Pan* (Adelphi) and *Matilda* (RSC). Her TV credits include *The Midnight Gang*, *Nella The Knight*, *The Forgiving Earth*, *Victoria* and *Sainsbury's Christmas*. Zaris-Angel trains full-time at the Sylvia Young Theatre School.

**Zainab Hasan** returns to the Donmar Warehouse after appearing in the Shakespeare Trilogy and *Henry IV*. Zainab also appeared in the Donmar's productions of *The Tempest* and *Henry IV* at St. Ann's Warehouse, NY. Other theatre credits include *My White Best Friend* (Bunker), *Tamburlaine*, *Tartuffe* and *Timon of Athens* (RSC), *Hijabi Monologues* (Bush), *Boy* (Almeida), *Tory Boyz*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Prince of Denmark* (Ambassadors), *Red Riding Hood* (Latitude Festival), *On The Dole* (Lyric Hammersmith), *D* and *The Boyfriend* (Oval House), *Routes* (Hampstead) and *Totally Over You* (Tricycle).

**Joanna Horton** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *Othello* (Shakespeare's Globe), *All's Well That Ends Well*, *As You Like It*, *The Gods Weep* and *Days of Significance* (RSC), *Belongings* (Hampstead), *The Cherry Orchard* (Birmingham Rep), *Town* (Royal & Derngate, Northampton). Her TV credits include *Endeavour*, *Dark Angel*, *Silent Witness*, *Partners In Crime*, *Children Next Door*, *Knifeman*, *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*, *Father Brown*, *London's Burning*, *Doctors*, *Permanently Excluded*, *Holby City*, *New Tricks*, *Breaking The Mould*, *The Bill*, *Midnight Man*, *Bike Squad*, *Holby Blue*, *Five Days*, *Robin Hood*, *Spooks*, *Eleventh Hour*, *Afterlife* and *Foyle's War*. Her film credits include *Fish Tank* and *The Listener*.

**Thusitha Jayasundera** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *Our Town* (Regent's Park Open Air), *Stories*, *Behind The Beautiful Forevers*, *Crime and Punishment* and *War Horse* (National Theatre), *The Divide* (Old Vic/King's, Edinburgh), *The Vertical Hour* (Park), *Tiger Country* (Hampstead), *A Day at the Racists* (Finborough), *Dreams of Violence* (Out of Joint/Soho/UK Tour), *Twelfth Night*, *As I Lay Dying* (Young Vic), and *Cain*, *Peer Gynt*, *Pentecost*, *The Comedy of Errors* (RSC). Her TV credits include *Humans*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Doctor Foster*, *Broadchurch*, *The C Word* and *Above Suspicion*.

**Petra Letang** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *Soul* (Royal & Derngate, Northampton), *Random* (Chichester), *Pandora's Box* (Arcola), *Truth & Reconciliation*, *Fallout*, *Escobar Estate*, *Breath Boom* and *Rough Road to Survival* (Royal Court), *Every Coin* (Synergy Theatre Company), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and *Generations of the Dead* (Young Vic), *My Wonderful Day* (Off Broadway), *Baby Girl/The Miracle* and *The President of an Empty Room* (National Theatre), *The Weave* and *Badnuff* (Soho Theatre), *How Love is Spelt* (Bush), *Beautiful Thing* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Mules* (Clean Break) and *Local Boy* (Hampstead). Her TV credits include *The Reluctant Landlord*, *Little Boy Blue*, *People Just Do Nothing*, *Holby City*, *Secret Dude Society*, *EastEnders*, *The Bill*, *The Last Detective*, *Jonathan Creek*, *Babyfather 2* and *Family Affairs*. Her film credits include *Betsy and Leonard*, *Wondrous Oblivion* and *A Heart Divided*.

**Leah Mondesir-Simmonds** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her TV credits include *Holby City*.

**Kate O'Flynn** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *The End of History*, *Anatomy of a Suicide*, *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas* and *A Miracle* (Royal Court), *One for the Road/Mountain Language/Ashes to Ashes* (Harold Pinter), *The Glass Menagerie* (Duke of York's/Edinburgh International Festival), *The Trial* (Young Vic), *A Taste of Honey* and *Port* (National Theatre), *Lungs* and *The Sound of Heavy Rain* (Paines Plough/Crucible, Sheffield), *Marine Parade* (ETT), *The Whisky Taster* (Bush), *The House of Special Purpose* (Chichester), *See How They Run* and *The Children's Hour* (Royal Exchange, Manchester). Her TV credits include *Brexit*, *No Offence*, *Wanderlust*, *Doctor Thorne*, *Not You Again*, *Ordinary Lies*, *New Tricks*, *Room at the Top*, *Playhouse Presents: The Snipist*, *Above Suspicion*, *The Syndicate*, *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*, *Kingdom*, *The Palace* and *Trial & Retribution*. Her film credits include *Peterloo*, *Bridget Jones's Baby*, *Mr. Turner*, *Up There* and *Happy Go Lucky*. Her awards include the Clarence Derwent Award and Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for *The Glass Menagerie*, a Manchester Evening Standard Award for Best Newcomer for *The Children's Hour*, a TMA Award for Best Supporting Actress for *The Children's Hour* and the Critics' Circle Award for Most Promising Newcomer for *Port*.

**Ashna Rabheru** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Ashna graduated from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where her work included *Between Riverside and Crazy*, *Candide*, *The Crucible* and *Much Ado about Nothing*. Her theatre credits include *Trojan Horse* (LUNG/Leeds Playhouse) and *Top Girls* (National Theatre). Her TV credits include *Pickle Jar*, *Sex Education*, *Year of the Rabbit*, *Bounty*, *Is This Thing On?* and *Indian Summers*. Her radio credits include, *Deacon: Moonlight on Water*, *Splott*, *Dangerous Visions: Perimeter* and *Where This Service Will Continue*.

**Jemima Rooper** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *Orpheus Descending* (Theatr Clwyd/Menier Chocolate Factory), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Regent's Park Open Air), *The Norman Conquests* (Chichester), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Young Vic), *Me and My Girl* (Crucible, Sheffield), *One Man, Two Guv'nors* (National Theatre/UK Tour/Adelphi/Music Box, NY), *Blithe Spirit* (Gielgud/US Tour), *All My Sons* (Apollo) and *Her Naked Skin* (National Theatre). Her TV credits include *Gold Digger*, *Death in Paradise*, *Trauma*, *Atlantis*, *A Bouquet of Barbed Wire*, *Lost in Austen*, *Hex* and *As If*. Her film credits include *Kinky Boots*, *One Chance*, *What If* and *The Black Dahlia*.

**Taya Tower** makes her Donmar Warehouse debut in *[BLANK]*. Her theatre credits include *The Hunt* (Almeida). Taya is currently nominated for the Stage Debut Award for Young Performer.

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact:**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **ABOUT THE DONMAR WAREHOUSE**

The Donmar Warehouse is a 251-seat, not-for-profit theatre in Covent Garden, led by Artistic Director Michael Longhurst and Executive Producer Henny Finch. We have won more than 100 awards in our 27-year history.

From our iconic warehouse space in the heart of London's West End, we create world-class theatre with international impact. Our intimate auditorium offers audiences a unique shared experience, and an unparalleled connection with performers.

We believe that representation matters; diversity of identity, of perspective, of lived experience enriches our work and our lives.

We develop new artists and future audiences through our renowned training programmes and our Discover activity in schools and communities.

We share the theatre we make widely through transfers, tours and on screen.

Welcome to important stories, thrillingly told.

**[www.donmarwarehouse.com](http://www.donmarwarehouse.com) | Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube: @DonmarWarehouse**



**ABOUT CLEAN BREAK**

**Clean Break** changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prison and in the community. It produces ground-breaking plays with women's voices at the heart of its work. Founded in 1979 by two women prisoners who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of imprisoned women to a wider audience, it remains true to these roots; inspiring playwrights and captivating audiences with the company's award winning plays on the complex theme of women and crime.

Its commissioned playwrights have included Zawe Ashton, Alice Birch, Deborah Bruce, Lin Coghlan, E V Crowe, Vivienne Franzmann, Tanika Gupta, Katie Hims, Sam Holcroft, Theresa Ikoko, Lucy Kirkwood, Chloë Moss, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock and Rebecca Prichard.

Clean Break's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season One launched with *Inside Bitch* at the Royal Court, and included *Belong* at Arcola Disruption Festival and Lyric Hammersmith Evolution Festival, and *All the Lights Are On*, the company's first collaboration with Cardboard Citizens. Season Two of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary includes *Sweatbox* by Chloë Moss, *[BLANK]* by Alice Birch, a Clean Break commission co-produced by the Donmar Warehouse, and a series of talks and events featuring conversations with Clean Break's founders, Southall Black Sisters, Deborah Coles and Sonali Naik QC.

The Company is led by Joint Artistic Directors, **Anna Herrmann** and **Róisín McBrinn**, and Executive Director **Erin Gavaghan**.

[www.cleanbreak.org.uk](http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk) | Twitter, Instagram and YouTube: @CleanBrk | Facebook: @CleanBreak

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**DONMAR WAREHOUSE:****LISTINGS**

Donmar Warehouse, 41 Earlham Street, Seven Dials, London WC2H 9LX

[www.donmarwarehouse.com](http://www.donmarwarehouse.com)

Box Office: **020 3282 3808** (No booking fees, £1 postage fee may apply)  
Telephone Mon-Sat 10am-6pm  
In person Mon-Sat, 10am-curtain up (with some exceptions, see website)

**PERFORMANCE TIMES**

Evenings Mon – Sat: 7.30pm

Matinees Thu & Sat: 2.30pm

**TICKET PRICES**

£10 | £20 | £30 | £40

**PREVIEW PRICES**

£10 | £17.50 | £27.50 | £37.50

**PREVIEW DISCOUNTS APPLY ON FOLLOWING DATES**

*[BLANK]*

Friday 11 October – Tuesday 15 October 2019

**YOUNG+FREE**

YOUNG+FREE tickets for 16 – 25 year olds released by ballot every month. Sign up at [www.donmarwarehouse.com](http://www.donmarwarehouse.com)

### DONMAR DAILY RELEASE

Additional tickets on sale, every day. Every morning at 10am, a minimum of 40 tickets will be released for the performances on that day the following week. Tickets will be available online across the auditorium at every price band, starting at £10.

### CONCESSIONS

For over 60s, £40 tickets reduced to £32.50 and £30 tickets reduced to £25 (matinees only). Must be booked in advance.

### ACCESS

The Donmar Warehouse is fully wheelchair accessible. Guide dogs and hearing dogs are welcome in the auditorium. There is an infrared system in the main auditorium and there is also a hearing loop in the box office.

### ASSISTED PERFORMANCES

If you require a companion to attend the Donmar, their ticket will be free. To book call 020 3282 3808 or email [access@donmarwarehouse.com](mailto:access@donmarwarehouse.com)

For all other access enquiries or bookings call 020 3282 3808

### CAPTIONED PERFORMANCES – 7.30PM (captioned by Stagetext)

[BLANK]

Monday 18 November

### AUDIO-DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE - 2.30PM (audio-described by Vocaleyes)

(TOUCH TOUR AT 1.00PM)

[BLANK]

Saturday 16 November

### TRANSPORT & PARKING

**Tubes:** Covent Garden, Leicester Sq, Charing Cross, Holborn, Tottenham Court Road

**Buses:** Destination Leicester Sq.14, 19, 24, 29, 38, 176

**Parking:** Masterpark

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The Donmar Warehouse and Clean Break are supported by Arts Council England



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